

POCKET GUIDE TO CINCINNATI BIKE LAWS



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INTRODUCTION



Thanks for picking up a copy of the Pocket Guide to Cincinnati Bike Laws. This guide is designed to help inform both cyclists and law enforcement officers of the rights and responsibilities of cyclists on Cincinnati streets.

All quoted regulations are taken from the Cincinnati Municipal Code (CMC), Title V “Traffic Code,” or Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Title 45 Motor Vehicles – Aeronautics – Watercraft. The CMC generally governs operation of bicycles on Cincinnati streets, but any operational issues not addressed by the CMC could be covered by ORC Title 45.

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TRAFFIC LAWS

DOES A CYCLIST HAVE TO OBEY TRAFFIC LAWS?

YES, cyclists have to obey traffic laws, including stopping at red lights and stop signs. According to CMC 506-4, "Every person riding a bicycle or motorized bicycle shall obey the rules of operation and right-of-way for all vehicles as provided by this chapter except when clearly exempted from any section thereof."

DOES A CYCLIST HAVE TO RIDE IN THE SAME DIRECTION AS TRAFFIC?

YES, cyclists must ride in the same direction as traffic. According to CMC 506-4(b), "Persons operating bicycles or motorized bicycles shall ride in the same direction as all other vehicular traffic."

TRAFFIC LAWS

DOES A CYCLIST ALWAYS HAVE TO RIDE TO THE RIGHT?

According to CMC 506-4(a), "Every person operating a bicycle or motorized bicycle upon a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable, obeying all traffic rules applicable to vehicles and exercising due care when passing a standing vehicle or one proceeding in the same direction."

However, ORC 4511.55 and 4511.25 clarify that cyclists are allowed to move away from the right side of the roadway under the following situations:

- When it is unreasonable or unsafe to remain to the right
- To avoid fixed or moving objects
- To avoid parked or moving vehicles
- To avoid surface hazards
- When the lane is too narrow for the bicycle and an overtaking vehicle to travel safely side by side within the lane

Other situations where it is unreasonable or unsafe to stay to the right may include:

- When preparing to make a left turn
- When a right-turn-only lane is present but you wish to continue straight-ahead



TRAFFIC LAWS

DOES A CYCLIST HAVE TO RIDE IN A BIKE LANE IF ONE IS PRESENT?

Many cyclists feel safer riding in bike lanes and prefer to use them; however, there are no regulations which state that bicyclists must use a bike lane when one is provided.

IS IT LEGAL FOR CYCLISTS TO RIDE TWO ABREAST?

According to CMC 506-4 (c), it is legal to ride two abreast. However it is not legal to ride more than two abreast in a single lane except during legally permitted events.

IS IT LEGAL TO RIDE ON THE SIDEWALK?

Only those who are 15 years old or younger may ride on the sidewalk. In these situations the cyclist must always yield to pedestrians (CMC 506-5).

However, some wider sidewalks are specifically designated for joint use by bicyclists (of all ages) with pedestrians. A special sign indicates the limits of these “shared paths” (CMC 501-1-B3).

Additionally, named bike-hike trails (i.e. Ohio River Trail) sometimes use wide sidewalks and are designated with more specific signs.



TRAFFIC LAWS

CAN CARS BE PARKED IN A BIKE LANE?

NO, according to CMC 508-1-A, “No person shall stand or park a vehicle except when necessary to avoid conflict with other traffic or with the provisions of the traffic code or in compliance with the directions of a police officer or a traffic-control device, on any on-street path or lane designated by official signs or markings for the exclusive use of bicycles.”



DOES CINCINNATI HAVE A 3-FOOT PASSING LAW?

YES, CMC 506-71 (b) states that, “The operator of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on a roadway shall leave a safe distance, but not less than 3 feet, when passing the bicycle and shall maintain that distance until safely past the overtaken bicycle.





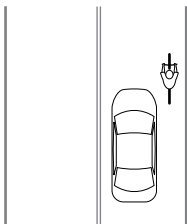
COMMON CRASH TYPES



PASSING TOO CLOSELY

Incident: A bicyclist riding on the right side of the road is struck by an overtaking vehicle in the same lane.

What the law says: According to CMC 506-71(b), "The operator of a motor vehicle overtaking a bicycle proceeding in the same direction on a roadway shall leave a safe distance, but not less than 3 feet, when passing the bicycle and shall maintain that distance until safely past the overtaken bicycle."



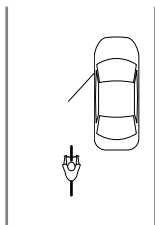
COMMON CRASH TYPES

DOORING

Incident: A bicyclist is struck by a motorist opening a car door into traffic.

What the law says: According to CMC 511-34, “No person shall open the door of a vehicle on the side available to moving traffic unless and until it is reasonably safe to do so, and can be done without interfering with the movement of other traffic, including bicyclists, nor shall any person leave a door open on the side of a vehicle available to moving traffic, including bicyclists, for a period of time longer

than necessary to load or unload passengers.”

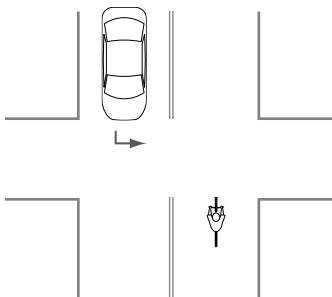


For their safety, the City of Cincinnati recommends that cyclists should ride four feet away from parked cars, even if it means taking a whole lane of traffic.

LEFT-TURNING VEHICLE

Incident: A bicyclist riding straight is hit by an oncoming vehicle turning left across their path.

What the law says: According to CMC 506-84(g), "The operator of a vehicle within an intersection intending to turn to the left shall yield the right of way to any vehicle or bicycle approaching from the opposite direction."

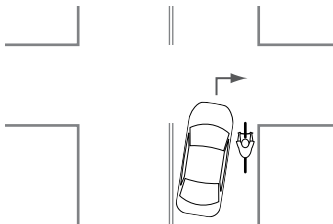


COMMON CRASH TYPES

RIGHT-TURNING VEHICLE

Incident: A bicyclist going straight in the right lane is hit by a car from the same lane while the car is making a right turn.

What the law says: According to CMC 506-84(h), "When a motor vehicle and a bicycle are traveling in the same direction on any roadway, the operator of the motor vehicle overtaking such bicycle traveling on the right side of the roadway shall not turn to the right in front of the bicycle at that intersection or at any alley or driveway until such vehicle has overtaken and is safely clear of the bicycle."



WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A BIKE CRASH

If you're hurt in a traffic crash, don't ride away or shake off what seems like a minor injury — you might find later that it's worse than you thought. Instead:

- Call the Police at 911. If needed, get medical help immediately.
- Get the following information from every vehicle: driver's name, address, phone number, driver's license, license plate number, make of car, insurance company and policy number.
- Get the names and phone numbers of witnesses. Get the name and badge number of the police officer.
- Get the police report number from the officer at the scene.

WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF A BIKE CRASH

- Write down how the crash happened while it's fresh in your memory.
- Keep (or photograph) any damaged clothes or equipment.

Also, if you are a victim:

- Don't get mad at the scene. Keep a level head so you can ask questions and take notes.
- If injured, don't move until an EMT has had a chance to examine you.

GET THIS INFO:

**DRIVER, VEHICLE,
INSURANCE:**

Driver's Name: _____

Driver's License #: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Make of Car: _____

License Plate #: _____

Insurance Company: _____

Policy #: _____

WITNESSES:

Name: _____

Phone: _____

Name: _____

Phone: _____

POLICE:

Name: _____

Badge #: _____

Police Report #: _____

SAFETY EQUIPMENT



DOES A BICYCLE NEED A BELL?

YES, in Cincinnati "No person shall ride a bicycle unless it is equipped with a bell or other device capable of giving an audible signal, except that no bicycle shall be equipped with nor shall any person use upon a bicycle any siren or whistle" (CMC 503-40).

DOES A BICYCLE WITH A FIXED GEAR NEED A BRAKE?

According to ORC 4511.56 (D), "Every bicycle shall be equipped with an adequate brake when used on a street or highway."

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

DOES A BICYCLE NEED LIGHTS WHEN BEING DRIVEN AT NIGHT?

ORC 4511.56 requires that bicycles in use between sunset and sunrise be equipped with the following:

1. A lamp mounted on the front of either the bicycle or the operator that shall emit a white light visible from a distance of at least five hundred feet to the front and three hundred feet to the sides. A generator-powered lamp that emits light only when the bicycle is moving may be used to meet this requirement.
2. A red reflector on the rear that shall be visible from all distances from one hundred feet to six hundred feet to the rear when directly in front of lawful lower beams of head lamps on a motor vehicle.

3. A lamp emitting either flashing or steady red light visible from a distance of five hundred feet to the rear shall be used in addition to the red reflector. If the red lamp performs as a reflector it may serve as the reflector and a separate reflector is not required.

ARE CYCLISTS REQUIRED TO WEAR HELMETS?

Per CMC 505-13(b), bicyclists 15 years of age and younger are required to wear helmets. The City of Cincinnati Bicycle Transportation Program recommends that adults also wear helmets.

BIKE PARKING OR SECURITY



WHERE CAN A BICYCLE BE LOCKED?

There is no specific language in the CMC or ORC detailing where a bike may or may not be locked.

In general, where the sidewalk is narrow, try to park parallel to the curb and take extra care not to block the sidewalk with parked bicycles. Maintain access to traffic push buttons and cross walks, utility boxes, flower pots and the entrances to businesses.

Please do not lock to trees, hand railings, newspaper boxes, outdoor café railings and other private property.

Existing public bike racks are mapped on the interactive OKI Bike Route Guide.

<http://maps.oki.org/BikeRouteGuide/>

BIKE PARKING OR SECURITY

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO LOCK A BICYCLE?

Given enough time and the right tools, any lock can be broken, but there are ways to reduce the likelihood of theft. Always be sure to lock your bike with a sturdy U-lock or stout cable, even if you think you will only be away from it for a short time. Use the lock to secure your bike frame and at least one wheel. Cables and U-locks can be used together to secure the frame and both wheels.

Be sure to lock to something solid and permanent. If you need to lock to a sign post, make sure the sign cannot be easily pulled out of the ground. If possible, lock your bike in a highly visible area that is close to your destination.

Before you leave, take anything that can be removed such as unlocked wheels, quick-release seat posts, lights, bike bags. If you can take it off, so can someone else.

HOW DOES A CITIZEN REQUEST THAT A BIKE RACK BE INSTALLED IN A SPECIFIC LOCATION?

Visit www.5916000.com and select “General Request.”

ARE BUILDINGS REQUIRED TO HAVE BICYCLE PARKING?

Buildings are not required to provide bicycle parking; however, as of May 2010, bicycle parking is required in all new or significantly expanded parking garages within the City of Cincinnati. (CMC 413-16, and 1425-38). This includes private and public garages.

BICYCLES ON METRO AND TANK BUSES



Only folding bicycles are allowed inside Metro and TANK buses. However, bike racks are now available on the front of all Metro and TANK buses at no extra charge. For information on how to use the bike racks, visit:

www.go-metro.com/riding-metro/bike-ride

www.tankbus.org/programs/bike-ride.aspx

SAFELY CROSSING STREETCAR TRACKS



Always slow down and *cross streetcar tracks at a 60-90 degree angle*. Crossing incorrectly can result in your front tire sliding on the rail or getting stuck in the gap next to the rail, which can cause you to fall from your bicycle.

In order to cross at the right angle, you may need to turn a little away from the track first, and then cross it. Make sure to slow down first, look behind you, and signal if appropriate.

Streetcar tracks become slippery when wet. Use caution riding in the rain or in winter weather.

ABOUT US



The mission of the *City of Cincinnati Bicycle Transportation Program* is to make bicycling an integral part of daily life in Cincinnati, so that persons of all ages and abilities utilize bicycles for all types of trips. We work toward this goal by planning, engineering, and implementing bicycle facilities, and by educating the community about bicycle transportation.

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/bikes

ABOUT US

The Cincinnati Police Department is the primary law enforcement agency for the City. The primary responsibilities of the Police Department are:

- Prevention of crime
- Protection of life and property
- Suppression of criminal activity
- Apprehension and prosecution of offenders
- Regulation of noncriminal conduct
- Preservation of public peace

www.cincinnati-oh.gov/police/pages/-3039/

**PLEASE RIDE SAFELY
AND RESPONSIBLY.**

